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Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SCS-01 SSO-00 EUR-08 CA-01
L-01 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-05 INRE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SNM-02 PRS-01 DODE-00 /041 R

DRAFTED BY EA/VLC:MPOWENS/FMLC
APPROVED BY EA:WGLEYSTEEN
EA/VLC:TMCARNEY
EA/TIMBS:MEASTON
CA/SCS:RBELT
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC IMMEDIATE
DOD IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 010793

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PDIP, US, VM

SUBJECT: AMERICAN YACHT BRILLIG

1. HAM RADIO OPERATORS CONFIRMED EARLY THIS MORNING WASHINGTON TIME THAT THE BRILLIG HAD PUT TO SEA AND WAS PROCEEDING TO SINAPORE. SIGNALS FROM YACHT INDICATED CREW AND
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VESSEL WERE IN GOOD CONDITION. CREW ESTIMATED THEY WOULD REACH SINGAPORE IN 4-6 DAYS. AS OF COB TODAY, A U.S. NAV VESSEL HAD REACHED THE BRILLIG AND HAD OFFERED ASSISTANCE. IT ALSO REPORTED CREW AND YACHT IN GOOD SHAPE.

2. ON JANUARY 12 U.S. NETWORKS AIRED AN INTERVIEW FILMED IN HO CHI MINH CITY DECEMBER 22 IN WHICH CREW APPEARED TO

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ADMIT POSSESSION OF LARGE AMOUNTS OF MARIJUANA. THE VIETNAMESE DECISION TO LET CREW GO WITHOUT PAYING A LARGE FINE FOR SUCH ALLEGED VIOLATIONS WAS PROBABLY BASED ON REALIZATION THAT FURTHER DETENTION OF THE CREW COULD RESULT IN SERIOUS DAMAGE TO US-SRV RELATIONS AND THAT HOLDING THE CREW INCOMMUNICADO FOR SO LONG HAD WEAKENED THEIR CASE. THEY MAY NOW ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE CREW'S RELEASE AS A "GOODWILL GESTURE".

3. GIVEN THE RELEASE OF THE CREW AND VESSEL AND VIETNAMESE DECISION TO FOREGO FINE, WE WOULD NOW PREFER TO PUT THIS

MATTER BEHIND US. WE WILL REFRAIN FROM FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE VIETNAMESE HANDLING OF THE BRILLIG. IN ADDITION, WE WILL NOT REACT TO ATTEMPTS TO CHARACTERIZE THE RELEASE AS A GOOD WILL GESTURE.

4. FOR SINGAPORE: APPROPRIATE, LOW-KEY ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE ACCORDED THE CREW ON ARRIVAL.

5. FOLLOWING ARE RELEVANT EXCERPTS FROM GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN JANUARY 13 IN ANTICIPATION OF QUESTIONS RE FILMED INTERVIEW:

Q: TELEVISION FILMS TAKEN OF THE CREW IN SAIGON REVEALED THAT THE CREW DID HAVE A LARGE AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA ABOARD
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AT THE TIME OF THEIR CAPTURE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, DO YOU SEE THE VIETNAMESE DECISION TO FREE THE CREW WITHOUT FORCING THEM TO PAY A FINE AS A "GOODWILL GESTURE" TO THE UNITED STATES?

A: AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, WE ARE NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON ANY ASPECT OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE CREW AND I AM NOT GOING TO SPECULATE ON POSSIBLE FACTORS WHICH MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THE VIETNAMESE TO FREE THE CREW.
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Draft Date: 14 jan 1978
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Review Release Date: n/a
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SAS ID: 3773799
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN YACHT BRILLIG
TAGS: CASC, PDIP, OCLR, US, VM
To: SINGAPORE BANGKOK MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bca363e3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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